

Headquarters Military Traffic Management Command

News Release

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MTMC TEA study rethinks C-130 freight hauling ability

Phone calls and e-mail are flowing into Joe Cassidy's desk these days.

Cassidy has already participated in four separate Pentagon briefings – three with three-star generals!

Cassidy's new prominence is a result of his work reviewing the capability of one of the U.S. Air Force's most venerable airplanes – the C-130 Hercules.

In a just completed study, Cassidy says the C-130 aircraft can carry less cargo and can fly shorter distances than many Army planners previously assumed.

"A lot of people think you can land on a dirt road in Kosovo," said Cassidy. "You can't."

In fact, he said, such a landing would require a rudimentary airstrip six-tenths of a mile long and five interstate highway lanes wide. Cassidy serves as Transportability Team Leader, in the agency's Deployability Engineering Branch.

In an era of transformation, with Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, Army Chief of Staff, seeking to move a lighter Army force quicker – the study is forcing some rethinking.

With almost 500 aircraft, the C-130 has been the Air Force's primary tactical cargo aircraft since 1956.

Many Army planners and developers do not realize some of the aircraft's limitations.

These characteristics, well known to the Air Force, include:

- No air refueling capability.
- A minimum of 3,000 feet of landing space required for assault landings.
- Reduced cargo capacity during assault landings.
- Safety aisles in cargo loads which reduce total capacity.

The briefing to Army leaders began in February.

"I was impressed by the attention senior Army leaders provided to our briefing," said Cassidy. "In each briefing, we would be told to pass the briefing on to others."

The additional briefings stimulated even more phone calls and e-mails to Cassidy.

“The computer is going crazy,” said Cassidy. “The only ones not surprised are the airborne community – they work with the C-130s all the time.”

What is next for Cassidy?

“We’re doing a follow-up study on the Air Force’s strategic airlift plane – the C-17 Globemaster III.”

The C-130 report is available on the agency Web at www.tea.army.mil/dpe look under “What’s New.”

Lt. Col. Tom Harvey, Chief, MTMC Headquarters Command Operating Center, praised the report.

“I think there is a real good understanding of the C-130 in the airborne community,” said Harvey. “They use the aircraft all the time.

“In the rest of the Army, we do not consider the tactical loads of the aircraft, unless it involves a move or our particular unit.”

Cassidy agrees with that assessment.

“The only ones not surprised are the airborne community.”